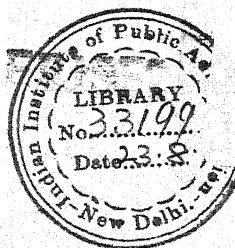


# PROBLEMS OF RECONSTRUCTION

*Lectures delivered at the forty-third Anniversary  
Meeting of the Theosophical Society at  
Delhi, December, 1918*

BY  
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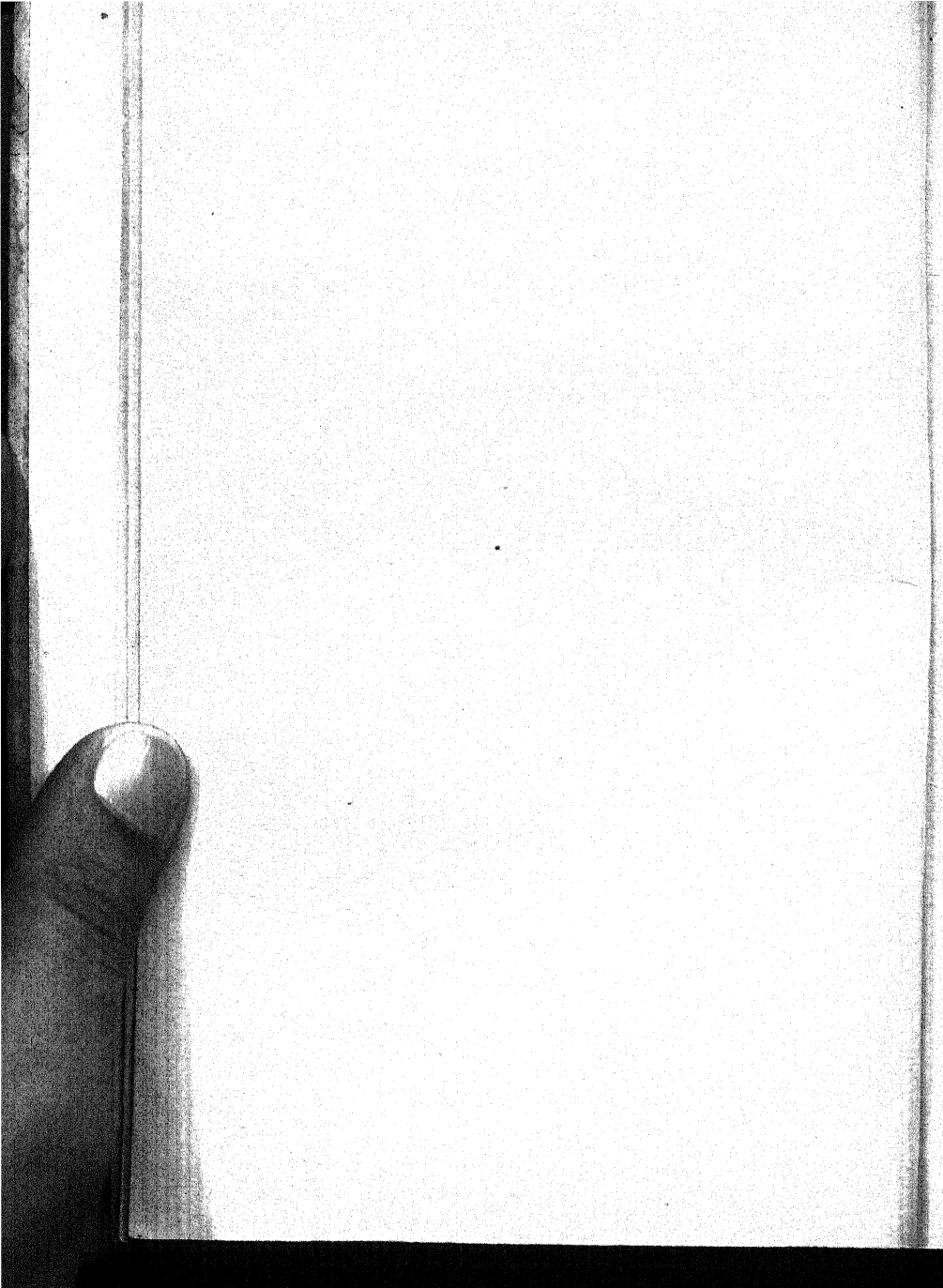
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## FOREWORD

THE fourth lecture printed herein, on Educational Reconstruction, was given for the Society for the Promotion of National Education, and was delivered on December 23rd, the day before the commencement of the Theosophical Convention. I include the substance of it here, as it completes the series, though, by an error, it was not fully taken down.

ANNIE BESANT

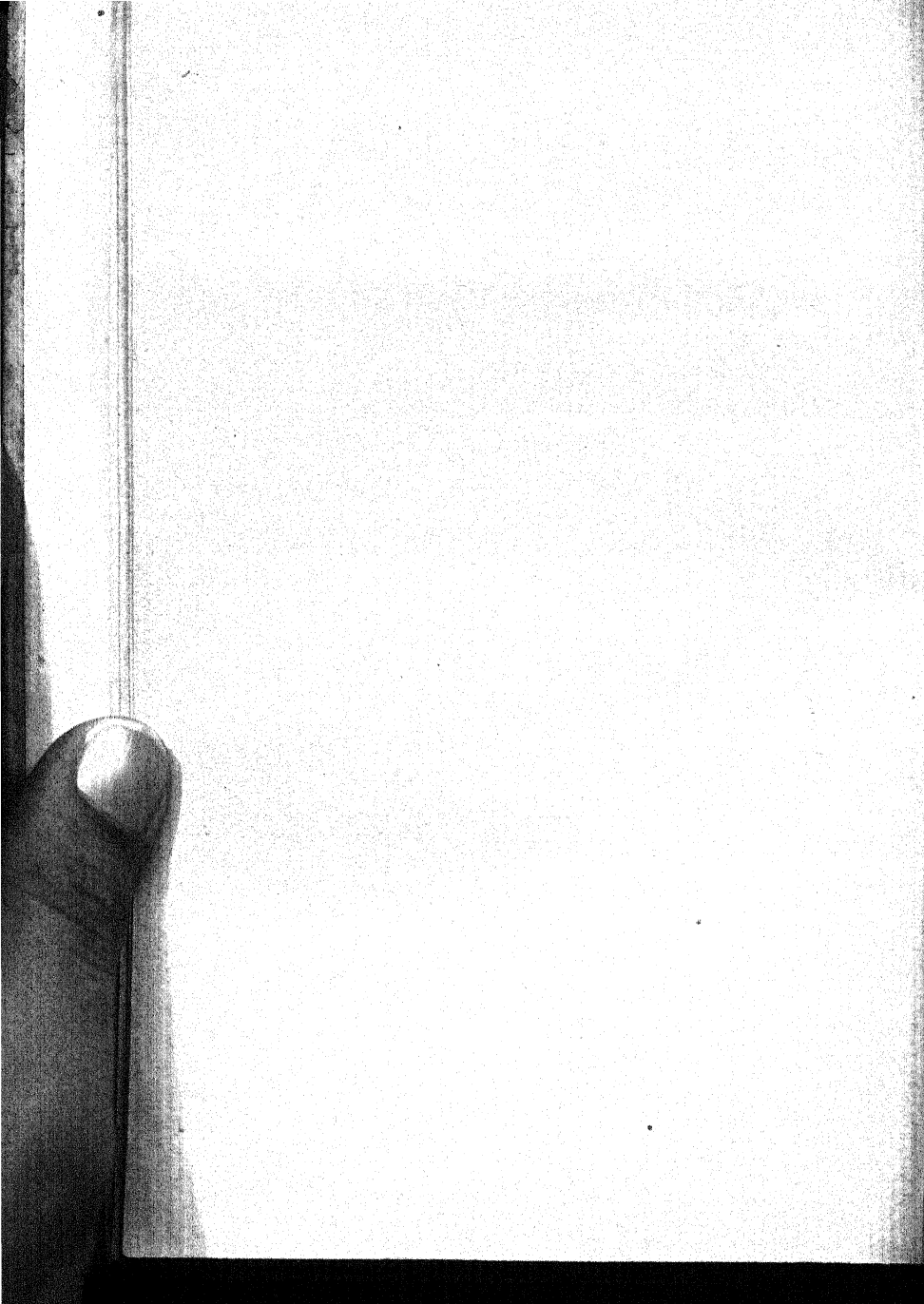




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## LECTURE I

### RELIGIOUS RECONSTRUCTION

FRIENDS,

I have to address you this morning on the Problems of Religious Reconstruction. Yesterday morning I was dealing with the problems of the Reconstruction of National Education. To-morrow and the day after, I propose to deal with problems which will touch on the reconstruction of Society, and on the day after that with the problems of political life—on the deeper political problems, on which, as on all other serious and profound questions, the light of the Divine Wisdom ought to be shed. As many of you well know, the very meaning of the word Theosophy is Divine Wisdom. There is nothing in human life, nothing in the whole range of human knowledge, which does not come within the purview of Divine Wisdom, that wisdom which, according to the ancient Hebrew saying, “mightily and sweetly ordereth all things”. There is a tendency, a natural tendency, to limit the name, as though it were a label on some special product, and that tendency is the more natural perhaps, when the name is founded on a foreign tongue—in this case the Greek. If it were

called in English "God-Wisdom" or "Divine Wisdom," if it were called in Samskr̥t Brahma Vidyā, if it were called, as among the early Christians, Gnosticism, then it would be realised that there was nothing in it limited or narrow. Then it would be realised, as in the old definition given in an Upaniṣhaṭ of Brahma Vidyā, that it has two divisions, the lower and the upper—the Aparā Vidyā and the Parā Vidyā—that in the lower there are comprised all subjects of human knowledge without exception, everything in fact which can be taught by human voice and heard by human ear. The higher, the Supreme Wisdom—the Parā Brahma Vidyā—is the realisation of God Himself. That is called sometimes "knowledge" because our human language is poor. It is not really knowledge, the Parā Vidyā: it is realisation. You may remember how in another Upaniṣhaṭ it is written: "He who says 'I know,' he knows not"; a contradiction, a paradox, because knowledge implies an Object of knowledge and a Knower, and knowledge is the relation between the Knower and the Object that is known. But in the realisation of the Infinite Deity there is no knower and no object of knowledge. There is perfect unity. There is One without a second. There is the gathering up of all life into the Life Universal, of all selves into the One Self, of whom they are the offspring. Hence Parā Vidyā is not knowledge: it is realisation—the realisation of the unity, of the merging of the separated selves

with the One, that which leads man to say, not "I know," but to feel "I am"—that which is beyond all language, which is in the silence, the realisation of the unity of the part with the whole, the incommunicable secret of Existence itself. But language is poor, and so we have to speak of Divine Knowledge, Divine Wisdom: that is the essence, that the aim of all religion; and then comes the lower wisdom, as I have just quoted from the Upaniṣat, the knowledge of all things which man can teach to man. Realisation is individual experience. Of that I shall have to speak; but the lower wisdom, the lower Divine Wisdom, includes everything which can be learnt, which can be taught: there is nothing outside its area, there is nothing that can be excluded from its purview. Not only human life but all life comes within its infinite embracing, and everything which can concern the embodied God within us comes within the influence of the wisdom that is Divine.

Hence you will find in human history that every great, new civilisation has a new expression of religion behind it; every fresh proclamation of religion is brought by some mighty Teacher, super-human in His knowledge, His compassion, His wisdom; every such repetition of the ancient story is the beginning of a new form of religious belief, suited to the time, suited to the people, suited to the stage of evolution in which that people are. Hence we find that looking over history, we can distinguish

the stages of civilisation by the re-proclamation of the ancient spiritual truths : always the same, always the Eternal Truth, that which the Hindū calls the Sanāṭana Dharma ; that is the Eternal Veda, the Eternal Knowledge, but as the ancient traditions of Hindūism say, the Veda which is One. It is divided into more, into two, into three, into four, according to the needs of the Age and the capacities of the people. So each of the varied religions of the world, each of them has its own place, its own work, its forming of the polity for the Nation. It is the building of a civilisation which is to influence the world.

In the very ancient days we find that every Nation had its own religion. You might go further back. You know that there were times when in families and in groups of families, which were the seed of a future Nation, there were special forms of worship, special family ceremonies, special family rites in which every member of the family took part, and the rest of the world were outside. Then we find that as families grew into tribes there were tribal religions, and only those who were members of the tribe knew the secrets of the tribal faith ; and as the tribes grew into Nations, similarly we find there were National religions, so that when you look over the ancient world with its many Nations, you do not find them quarrelling about religions. Every Nation had its own faith. Religion was part of the National life. To leave the National religion was to be a

traitor to the State. Nation and religion were one and indivisible. That was the ancient State, right down to the times of Republican and Imperial Rome ; and so in the Roman Empire there was no interference with the religions of the people, and in the great city of Rome you find the Pantheon, the temple to "all the Gods". Every National religion in the Roman Empire was represented in that temple, and all were on the same level, all were regarded and honoured. Hence in those old times, if there was a quarrel, then religion took part in it as part of the Nation, but it was not, in the same sense as now, a religious quarrel. The rebuke to the Hebrews was that they went after *strange* Gods. But with the advent first of Christianity, which claimed to be a universal religion and therefore challenged all other religions and put them down together as "heathendom," there came quarrels and persecutions. Rome persecuted Christians, not because they worshipped Christ, but because they refused to bow to the Roman Emperor as divine and thus attacked the Roman polity ; because they claimed that theirs was the only Faith, and Rome could not have its deities trampled upon, could not have its worship blasphemed. The test was, would a man throw incense on the altar of Cæsar ? If he would not, he was a traitor to the State ; and thus there came in the religious idea of persecution ; and from that time onward this claim was heard. Similarly with the



mighty religion of Islām, later in history. That also claimed to be a universal religion, and we shall see in a moment the value of that claim on the part of Christianity and of Islām as regards the relationship between Nations, for these great changes in history are not accidental. These departures in individual character are not matters of chance. They are all part of the plan of those guiding hands which shape human destiny and guide human evolution.

While first I drew your attention to the Nationality of religions, I shall want in a moment to draw your attention to the inter-Nationality of religions—a very different step. Now for a moment pause on that, and notice how in those ancient religions the National idea persists. Take Hindūism, the most ancient living Faith. You cannot be a Hindū unless you are born into Hindūism. No amount of acceptance of Hindū doctrine, no amount of living the Hindū ideal of life, no knowledge of Hindū philosophy, will avail to turn into a Hindū a person who has not Hindū parents, who does not belong by birth, to the Hindū Faith. Take myself, if you like, as an example, who certainly know more of Hindūism than, I fancy, a good many of you do. Having made a deeper study of it, living much more of a Hindū life than a good many of you do, who nominally belong to it, I yet cannot be a Hindū ; the gate is shut. That has one advantage and one disadvantage. It has the advantage of teaching tolerance



of other Faiths. If they keep me outside Hindūism, if I cannot enter it, clearly Hindūism cannot say to me: "You must not have any religion." That would be outrageous, and so you find the note of Hindūism in the words of Shri Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*: "Mankind comes to me along many roads, and on the road on which a man approaches me, on that road do I welcome him, for all roads are mine." There lies the advantage in the way of tolerance. The disadvantage is that as intercommunication spreads, as Nations have more to do with each other and people are not born as they were in the old days, in a caste according to their past, but rather according to the use to be made of them in their lives, Hindūism cannot spread and cannot affect other religions as a Christian missionary can; and Christianity and Islām can become World Faiths, but Hindūism must remain only a National religion. That has a great disadvantage. In the first place, Hindūism is the root religion of the whole Āryan Race. The Āryan Race has spread all over the world. It has spread into Persia, and there gave birth to Zoroastrianism. It spread along the Mediterranean coasts, and gave birth to the great religions of Greece and Rome, which have influenced the whole of the Latin races. It spread over Europe, carrying with it its deathless love of freedom and its evolved capacity for Self-Government. It carried its village communities into Scandinavia, into England, into

Germany, into Slavonian countries. It carried all its characteristics with it, but not its religion. But in that religion all the great doctrines are contained, and there is nothing in the later religions that you cannot find in Hindūism. There is no doctrine of Christianity, there is no doctrine of Islām, there is no doctrine of any great Faith, that is not part of Hindūism, and embodied in Hindū philosophy. What is there more all-pervading than the Vedānta? What philosophy more all-embracing than the philosophic systems of the Hindū religion? I would ask you to think that although Hindūism has been priceless in making an Indian Nation possible, it has a duty to its younger children also, it has a duty to its children scattered over the whole world. It ought not to keep out those who are essentially members of the great Faith, nor deny to them the entrance into their inheritance because they happen to have been born outside the limits of Hindustan. It is not a question to be lightly decided. It is a question to be thought over, because the present system means a diminishing number of Hindūs in comparison with the spreading religions which have no such National limitations. It means that Hindūism diminishes, while the others grow, and that the Mother Religion of the Aryan Race is at a disadvantage everywhere, save within the limits of India. That is a problem I would put to you as stewards of a magnificent Faith; it is too mighty to be limited within a single people. It is

inter-National and not only National. But you must think it over for yourselves. Karma gives to you the right to decide; but at least it is true that even if the heritage of Hindūism be held back for India, your literature is going over the whole civilised world, your Upaniṣaṭs are studied in the West as well as in the East, your *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the Song of the Lord, is sung in every country and in every climate. They read it within the Arctic zone; they study it over the whole of Europe; it has spread into far-off America; and it is moulding the thought of the whole Āryan Race, although the name of Hindū may not be given to those who follow its teachings. That great treasure is a treasure you have created for the world; and your isolation for a time was permitted in order that you might keep the treasure unspoiled and unpolluted and unstained, until by your union with the British Empire you came into touch with a language which has become the world-language of the future, and your Scriptures, translated into English, are now moulding the thought of the whole world.

Consider, then, that inter-National question. There is a great value in an inter-National religion. Take Christianity and take Islām, the two great missionary religions: they leap over the bounds of a Nation; they realise a larger unity. The Musalmān, wherever he is, whatever his Nationality, finds a brother in another Musalmān, finds a friend and a comrade in

any part of the world where the Faith of the great Prophet of Arabia has spread and made its way. A mosque is being built in London; English Musalmāns live in Liverpool; and every child of Islām is a brother of every other child. Thus you forge links which are being woven between Nations, which in time will make war impossible. That is what an inter-National religion can do when it gains full power. It can draw all Nationalities together. You know that there has been a difficulty here in India because of the ties of Islām outside India. Granting there are difficulties for the moment, while the barbarous system of war as a decider of inter-National quarrels exists, although there may be difficulties to-day, they have the seed of future peace within them, when religion shall grow so strong that it shall say to the Nations: "You shall not tear each other in pieces; you are brothers in the same Faith." And so one hopes with Christianity. Christianity has had a curious history. It has divided and divided in a way that no other religion has done. You have the Church of Rome, widespread, mighty, found in all civilised States. You have the posterity of the revolt against Rome in the most progressive Nations of the world—Nonconformist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, whatever the name may be. Now in Christianity and in Islām, individuality has been developed as part of the work of the religion. The result is that, especially in

Christianity, in the division between Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic—I do not like the word Protestant, because you cannot live by protest against somebody else—you notice how that religion has worked as a dividing force. In Ireland it has made Self-Government impossible. Ulster is aggressively Protestant. Three-fourths of Ireland is equally aggressively Roman Catholic, conquered by England, and struggling for some seven hundred years. Laws were passed against Roman Catholics—laws of the most terrible description, entering into the inner lives of the people. The penal laws against the Roman Catholics of Ireland were the scandal of civilisation, and have made a gulf which is unbridgeable, a gulf that separates Britain from Ireland to-day. In England, Roman Catholics burnt their opponents, and in the next reign their opponents hanged and pressed Roman Catholics to death. In the reign of Akbar there was tolerance of all religions in India, while Queen Elizabeth was murdering Roman Catholics and Queen Mary was murdering Protestants. Penal laws remained down to the last century, until in 1829 was passed the Act for Catholic Emancipation : yet even to-day the oath that the King takes on his Coronation contains an insult to the Roman Catholic Church, against which his Roman Catholic subjects have protested. That is religion as a dividing force. But as people become more tolerant, the uniting force begins to show itself. Now in Islām, while it has been—against the

teaching of its Prophet—a persecuting religion, it has one thing in it marked and splendid, and that is, it embodies the spirit of democracy. There lies peace lasting into the future. That religion, more than any other, regards every Musalmān as a brother. He may be a prince, he may be a peasant, he may be rich, he may be poor, he may be living in a hovel, he may be living in a palace, but he is a brother Musalmān and he is welcomed. On, into the modern world with its changed conditions, that message of democracy has come through the mouth of Islām very, very largely, and the world should be grateful to Islām because that lesson is of the very essence of its Faith. Spreading as it does over many countries, influencing as it does many peoples, it shares with Christianity the advantage of being an inter-National religion ; and when we have a League of Nations, when men realise their duty to other Nations as well as to their own, then these two great religions will be of world-wide importance, because they are not religions of Races nor of Nations, but are universal and can welcome every child of man. There lies the value inter-National, compared with the value of National religions of which I have spoken. That question is one of the great problems of religion that have to be solved—not in a hurry, but slowly, gradually, by argument, by reason, by sentiment.

Now there is one way in which they will find their unity. Religion is one : religions are many. By

that I mean that the inner heart of every Faith is the same, is not in opposition to another ; and there is one way in which Religion shows itself, which is a uniting force. You who are Hindūs call it Brahma Vidyā, Parā Vidyā. Christians generally call it Mysticism in these modern days : it is the Realisation of God. On that there is no quarrel between Christian and Hindū, between Musalmān and Hebrew, between Zoroastrian and Jaina and Sikh. All Mystics say the same thing. All Mystics realise the same truth, and that is, their unity in spirit. The Hindū says : " I am That." The Musalmān teaches the same, along the line of Sūfism. The Christian Roman Catholic uses the tremendous phrase " deification of man ". You can have no stronger phrase than " Man becoming God," and that is recognised in the authorised literature of the Roman Catholic Church. The saint has found it, the yogī has found it, the knower of the truth has found it, and they none of them disagree. Religion is founded on experience, not on books or Churches or authority or argument or reasoning. From That, the Upaniṣhaṭ says, " reason falls back in silence ". There is no argument, no voice. And so, that inner truth of religion, the Realisation of God, is the uniting force in all religions. Whereas the forms are different, just as the mind of every one of you is different from the mind of his neighbour, so your own religion is different from others ; it is only the form that your mind prefers and most readily



accepts. It does not really matter in what religion you are born : they are all ways to God. Some forms of truth suit you and some do not. You find your religion in the way that suits you best, whether by the gateway of birth or by some other way, but the essence is the same.

A great dignitary of the Christian Church—the Dean of S. Paul's—in London, lecturing on Mysticism, used the very same phrase as occurs in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*—I do not know if he had read it. You remember the phrase which says : The Scriptures, “the Vedas, are as useful to the enlightened Brāhmaṇa”—not Brāhmaṇa by birth, but Brāhmaṇa by wisdom—“as a tank in a land flowing over with water”. If you are illuminated, all books lose their value, and the Dean of S. Paul's said in his lecture that Mysticism was the only scientific form of religion, and that the Mystic did not want the truth as water contained in a reservoir, because he had truth within himself, the spring of living water which rose up within him. It is the same simile in the East and the West. He in whom the Divine life has broken forth as an upspringing fountain, needs no teaching from outside by mouth of man or by written book, for the source of all books is the experience of divinity, and the Shāstras are but the expression of truth through the mouth of a man become Divine, truth flowing through the R̥shi, the Seer. A Mystic has gone beyond the human teacher, and has become taught of God.



That truth we must press as the foundation of every Nation, of every civilisation—whatever be the form of religion, we need not any particular religion, but Religion itself. The essence is the same, whether you take the ancient civilisation of Persia, founded on the teaching of its great prophet of Iran, whether you take the religion of Greece or Rome, whether you take the religion of Christ, whether you take the religion of the Lord Muhammad, or the religion of the Hindūs from the R̥shis of the ancient days—all those are expressions of Religion, not Religion itself. Religion is their heart, Religion is their might, Religion is their essence, but each one is suited to its birth-place, and out of that comes a new civilisation.

When that is realised, how are you going to meet it in your modern world? Take one case—the case of education. There are two ways in education, in making a religion part of it; one, to have a School belonging to each Faith—the Hindū School, the Musalmān School, the Jain School, the Sikh School. To these boys and girls is taught one form of religion. They go out into the outer world and meet men of other Faiths. It may, or may not, make them narrow, and instead of drawing them together, divide them as men, as they were divided in their education as boys and girls. That is one way. There is the other way that we call the Theosophical ideal, in which every religion is taught in the school that has boys or girls belonging to its Faith, taught by one of their Faith,

a Hindū boy by a Hindū teacher, a Musalmān boy by a Musalmān teacher, and so on. But everything else is common in school, except the special teaching of the form of doctrines in religion. In the mornings when all meet together for common worship, what happens? A Hindū boy gets up and chants a Hindū sloka; a Musalmān boy gets up and chants from *Al Quran*; a Christian boy gets up and reads a portion of the New Testament, and similarly a Buddhist. All join in the common worship voiced in the different languages of the different Faiths. And so they learn that all religions are really one, that there is only one God to whom all prayers go up. You may pray in Samskr̥t, in Arabic, in English—there is no language for God. He looks at the heart and not at the lip. Boys love God, love and reverence all religions, while they learn their own. And in such schools they generally finish by the common song of “Vande Mātaram”—the Motherland. Those are the two ways. You must decide which you think the better. The one thing important is that Religion should be taught: it is the foundation of character, the foundation of moral living in childhood, manhood and womanhood. Such problems arise within the religions.

Now comes a problem that is partly religious and partly National. You have seen there is a tendency in religion to divide. Take this country—the Indian Motherland. You have a very, very powerful

Hindū community, a very powerful Islāmic community, a smaller Christian community, but powerful because it belongs to the religion of the rulers. How should these affect your civic life? That is a problem you must all be thinking over now, and about which you must make up your minds. Are there to be divisions in your Nation? Are you to have a Christian community, a Muhammadan community, a Hindū community, a Pārsī community, a Sikh community and a Jaina community, quarrelling with each other? Where is the Nation among these? Are they to divide, and divide, and divide, until you have as many camps in your Nation as you have religions?

Or, are you to realise that while you may worship in different buildings, the Nation is one? That while you may pray in the mosque or the temple or the church, it is the Indian who is praying in them all, it is one God to whom he prays? Are you to understand, what is true, that in your civic assemblies, in your provincial councils, in your National assemblies, your civic interests are the same? The outer form of your religion is separate. There is no real difference between a Musalmān and a Hindū in regard to Indian matters. They differ in the forms of their law, differences in marriage customs, inheritance, etc., but those differences are not differences of the civic community but of the religious community. Would it not be wiser to do what all the more progressive Nations are doing, to let a man's

Faith be his own, that none shall challenge ; that all Faiths shall be equal before the law ; that religion shall give advantage to no man and disadvantage to no man ; but that in all matters not relating to religious differences, there shall be one people, one Nation, one undivided community, struggling to uplift the Nation as a whole, and not wasting its strength in internecine quarrels on religion ? It cannot come at once, but might it not be an ideal ?

Think for a moment of England. England has quarrelled over religions as bitterly as you have done. There is as much difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant historically, as there is between Hindū and Musalmān historically ; but when Catholics were emancipated, religious quarrels disappeared. No one asks now in a political election : "Is it a Roman Catholic standing or a Protestant standing ?" His politics are asked about, his opinions which affect the welfare of the country are criticised : his religion gives no advantage and no disadvantage. The law knows nothing of religious differences, but only that a citizen is—good, bad or indifferent.

I suggest that that is the ideal. You may not be able to take it at once, I grant, but it is the ideal to be worked up to, when there shall be no communal quarrels in matters of politics, when Religion shall not be a force to divide but a force to unite, and when people shall no longer dare to say to you : "You are

divided so much in religions that we cannot trust you to manage your own civic affairs." That is another problem you have to deal with.

There are other problems of Religion put from the outside, not from the inside. Take one which is perennial, another which is immediate. The perennial question is, why is there evil in the world at all, if the world comes from God and God can only be good? Men have asked that question constantly, and the older religions have answered it. Hindūism answers it; the religion of the Hebrews answers it. The Hebrew says through the mouth of one of his Prophets: "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" That is to say, in other language, evil and good are relative terms and vary with the stage of evolution that you have reached. Your morality is a growing thing. You had morality only of the family, then of the village. I came across, the other day, in reading some old Indian history, the trial of a man who had killed another man, and the other man belonged to another village. If he had killed a man of his own village, the penalty would have been very heavy, but as the other man belonged to another village, he only had to burn a lamp in the temple. Morality increases in area as living together increases, and it widens out from family to tribe, from tribe to community, from community to province and from province to Nation; and there it stands at present. You have no inter-National

morality—it is no good pretending that you have : it is only a farce. If you had inter-National morality, could you murder with a million bayonets, yet not with a simple knife? It is murder if you kill a man, but war if you kill a million. Now there is a difference. The one is motivated by a private grudge, and that is the motive of the murder. The other is moved by a larger motive, but not always a very noble one; none the less, killing is barbarous, however it is done : I do not say that it is not necessary ; I am one of those who think that the war which has just now ended was a righteous war. I believe that it was necessary to check the aggression of Germany, with the arrogant forces which she can command, and to prevent the triumph of autocracy and the crushing down of Nations under a frightful yoke. But I recognise at the same time that war is only a barbarous way of meeting danger. I do say that we have no inter-National morality : it is beginning, it is growing, it has not yet triumphed ; and that is one of your problems of the future. It is part of the larger problem of evil and good. Can you think of any other method of evolving the seed of divinity except the method of slow evolution from savage to civilised man, from the criminal to the saint? How else will you develop that seed of Godhead, unless His will becomes determined by Self-determination and not by the compulsion of outer law? As long as a man

*wants* to do wrong, that man is evil, no matter how you may appraise him by law. If he hates his neighbour, the seed of murder is in him : that you have to remember. There is no perfection until the Divine Will in the man is so evolved that of his own free choice he does the right and delights to do it. When he does not want to do wrong, when he does not want to trample on his neighbour, when he would rather lift up than cast down, when he uses his strength and his help to protect, to guide, to help in every way that strength can help weakness, then he is becoming divine. How are you going to evolve this and develop this ? Would you force a man to do a right ? But that is the outer law compelling : it does not evolve man. That is the real problem of evil. There is no other way save leaving man comparatively free to live rightly or wrongly, to have the law which is ever about him, encircling him, so that when he goes wrong he strikes against the law, and maims and even slays his mortal body, because he has gone against the law. That is the true nature of the Universe, and it ever tends to good. That which is an evil for the civilised man is good for the savage : he has to develop by experience ; there is no other way : he has to learn that in the world of which God is the life, selfishness of the body means suffering, until he feels instinctively and learns the joy of the Spirit, which is Sacrifice. When you say sacrifice you think of suffering, but Sacrifice is the life and

the joy of the Spirit, the pouring out of everything ; that is how the Spirit lives, for God has poured Himself into the world in order that man may develop, and the joy of the man who is touching Divinity is to give and not to take. That is where Sacrifice is life and joy : it is not pain and suffering ; the body may suffer but the heart rejoices ; the body may be mutilated but the Spirit lives and unfolds by that very pain ; and the time comes when the pain is over and only the joy of the giving remains, and those words spoken by Christ become true : " It is more blessed to give than to receive."

That brings me to the problem of the war : only a special case of evil. Now, what happened in this war ? The young of the Nations have perished. Take any English paper that you like, where there are pictures, and where they put on the page the roll of honour ; look at the faces—boys many of them. When you look at them with their clear eyes outlooking, you can see that they are the joy of their mothers' hearts—lads with soft, gentle mouths, not yet hardened by experience, with bright faces not yet stained by suffering—it is these who have died in the largest numbers during the war. And when men see that, they say : " What is to be the future of the Nation ? Those are the men who ought to have been the fathers of the coming generation, and they are dead." Think what it was in England at the time when the war broke out. It was the young men that came forward.



There was no conscription then. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge emptied themselves into battalions; young men of noble birth and of wealth, with bright, joyous prospects before them, flung themselves into the death grip for the sake of law and liberty. When the young men of a Nation can do that, it means that there is life in the Nation, despite any errors. But they have gone; the Nation has them no more. How do you explain it? God rules the world; why should the best of all be taken away? Your Indian soldiers who went to fight a quarrel which was not theirs, who faced climatic conditions the like of which they had never known before, who faced suffering that they had never dreamt of, and who fought to the death and died where they stood rather than turn their backs—they have also gone. Scarcely any of that first great army has come home again: they lie in Flanders, in Italy, in Mesopotamia, in Eastern Africa, dead, as men say; but that which is death to the body is, under such conditions, evolution and new life to the undying Spirit immortal. You may mow them down with machine-guns, you may kill them with bombs, you may leave no traces; the body flies in every direction, but the Spirit does not move. The Spirit has gained, it has not lost. They are young men who gave up everything the world could offer in order to die, and to die for a great ideal, for a broken treaty, for a torn-up scrap of paper. The

flag of a Nation is no rag : it is the glory and honour of the Nation, a tradition of the Nation, and to die for a principle like that, is to take a leap forward in evolution and to do in glorious death what might have taken centuries to accomplish in ordinary life. That is what has happened. If you cannot believe in reincarnation, I do not know how you can explain this. We know that these men are coming back into new bodies to build the new civilisation that will grow up now. They may not be the fathers of the next generation, because they compose the next generation themselves, but they bring back to the world's helping all they have won by a spirit of sacrifice—their increased knowledge, their greater devotion, their more passionate love of humanity ; and they will come crowding in thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, to gather round the Teacher, the Teacher who comes to found a new civilisation. That is what the war means to us : a war waged for right against wrong. It is a splendid thing for those who suffer. It is my belief that war will pass away, that we shall grow beyond it. But my belief that international law shall take the place of warring Nations, cannot blind me to the fact that these wars, where they are waged for noble principles, are one of God's ways of unfolding more quickly the Spirit that He needs for His helping, and of establishing a more glorious civilisation based on a nobler ideal.

Then think out that problem, and you will see how this belief shapes one's life over the most terrible scenes during the last four years and more. Realise that we shall have our men back again, that they will come to help, and that our duty now is to do the utmost we can in a religious spirit for the evolving of whatever Nation we may be living in at the time; for the religious spirit means the uplift of the whole and not only the uplift of a part. Within a Nation, it means that the poorest, the most miserable, the most degraded, shall be lifted up so that they may share in the culture and the happiness and the welfare of the Nation. If this belief is true, so long as a Nation has a degraded class, the whole Nation is degraded by its existence. So long as a Nation has people starving, the food taken by others is not wholly nourishing. As long as a Nation has an ignorant class, so long wisdom cannot be reached by the rest of the Nation that allows them to be ignorant. So long as some people are trampled under foot and treated as untouchables, so long is God untouchable, for Religion means unity, Religion means harmony, Religion means recognition of a common source of life, a common source of good, and all the problems of Religion are answered by two words: "Knowledge and Brotherhood," the activity that uses knowledge in a brotherly way, for the uplift of every child of man in the Nation.

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## LECTURE II

### SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

FRIENDS :

To-day I am to speak to you on the Problems of Social Reconstruction. In every country these problems are arising. Some countries have already taken them into consideration, and discussions are going on. In the United States of America, the Theosophical Society has formed a Bureau for Social Reconstruction, in which arrangements are beginning to form a definite Movement in favour of a reconstruction which shall be based on the great principle of Brotherhood. In England the subject is already being discussed, and here in India we are bound carefully to consider it. Circumstances will differ in different Nations to some extent, but in all the Western Nations and also in India—affected so largely by European civilisation—the same general aspect is to be seen. There are additional circumstances in India which do not arise in the same form in the West, but the fundamental difficulty is the same in all.

In order to understand how the problems arise, we have to look back for a time at the different social polities that existed in former times, whether in the West or in the East. You have to remember that the leading Western Nations all belong to offshoots of your own Aryan race. Therefore social conditions arose in those Nations similar to those which arose here. That is a point too often forgotten in the researches of modern historians in the West, especially of German historians, on this subject. The researches of Indian historians and scholars here, have unburied the earlier conditions in India, so that we have, both in East and West, an outline of the social arrangements of the great Aryan race—we Theosophists call it the Fifth Root Race, but the name does not matter much. The name Aryan is a familiar name here.

In the West also, that name is now recognised. It is admitted that the race arose in Asia; further that it settled either in northern Asia, as some think, or Central Asia, as other antiquarians contend. You may remember the famous work by B. G. Tilak, *The Arctic Home of the Aryan Race*. That is largely on the same line of thought as in our own Theosophical teaching. For while it is true that the early emigrants out of the preceding race came, under the Lord Vaivasvata Manu, from the Atlantean Continent, through Egypt to Arabia and Asia, and then to the northern part of Asia, they

were a very small selection, as you may say, to be counted by families, scarcely by tribes, not as yet by large communities. They travelled in huge caravans and made their way through the western part of Asia up to the north, to the borders of the northern sea. Then they travelled southwards and eastwards, and settled down in that sacred centre, the name of which is familiar to all of you who are Hindūs in your own Purāṇas. They came on, down to the *Sveṭa Dvīpa*, the White Island, to the sacred city of Shamballa. They came under the protection of those mighty Ones whom you speak of as the Kumāras—of *Sanat Kumāra*, the Head of all. There they dwelt with their *Manu* for long, multiplying and multiplying, until a great Nation was gradually formed in Central Asia. Then you had some offshoots going to many lands: some into Japan, where the traces of *Āryan* blood are still to be found in that Fourth-Race people; some going into Java, where many traces are left, and even further afield; then came the great period in which that Race, with its customs established, began the series of emigrations to Egypt, to Greece, to Russia, and westwards to form the peoples of Europe when it was gradually arising from its marshy condition into solid land. First went out the second sub-race—the root-stock remains as the first sub-race—the great emigration which peopled the shores of the Mediterranean, which in Egypt founded one of the great dynasties of the *Āryan* type.

Traces you can see in faces of that same Aryan type in the frescoes in the Chambers of the Egyptian Pyramids. There have been many invasions and conquests, and now the type is seen only among the peasant people. To-day among them you find the Aryan type, the chiselled features, the high nose which is sometimes mentioned as of the "high-nosed people from the north".

The third sub-race went to Persia, and built up the mighty kingdom of the Persians, Iran as it was called, under the shelter of the great Prophet whose name is barbarised into Zoroaster, who gave the religion of fire, whose descendants in religion are Zoroastrians, or Pārsis, who came into India and were welcomed, and live amongst us as an honoured community to-day.

Then the fourth went out to the Caucasus, and beyond, and it built ancient Greece, and later built ancient Rome and spread, making the beginnings of those called the "Latin races" in Europe. The Latin races are now the Italians, the Spaniards, the French, the Irish, and the people of the north of Scotland. The fifth was that of the Teutons, to the northern Caucasus, and these Teutons spread westward, into Poland, into Slavonia. From them also came those who were called the Prussians, and the Angles and the Saxons that you read about in the north and the south of Britain. Why have I given you this list of sub-races, of



settlers in the western lands? To tell you that while all this was going on, the root-stock of the people came down into India by Baluchistan, by Kashmir and Assam, and gradually spread southward, and became the dwellers in India, as we know it to-day. They came down here with definite customs, and those customs were carried westward by the fourth sub-race that we call the Keltic, by the fifth sub-race that we call the Teutonic. Whether we look at the parent in India or the children in the West, we find that they all founded village communities, and ruled those village communities themselves. That is a point that I want you to remember, for that is the old Aryan civilisation. You find those village communities all over Europe, and German historians have traced them more accurately and more clearly than any other Europeans have done.

I now come to England. When the Saxons came to England, when the Angles came to England, they brought the village community with them. They came to England some forty years after the last of the Romans had left the country. The Roman civilisation left its traces, but the Romans went, and had to fight for their own life in Italy, and were, as you know, overwhelmed by the invaders from the north. The Saxons came to England and brought their village customs with them. Here, in India, the same village customs prevailed, and the plan of your Indian village was the plan of the Saxon



villages in England. We have the account of both. What was the plan of the Indian village? The temple generally in the middle, then the households round that, every man with his own homestead, every man with his own yard-garden at the back. That is the property of the family, as family; then outside that, a ring of agricultural land assigned to the people as common property of the village, but given over for individual arable culture, sometimes remaining in the same family year after year, sometimes annually redistributed. Outside the cultivable arable land, the ring of pasture; and there the cattle, sheep, etc., all had their pasture, and the village servant—the village shepherd—looked after the whole of those animals for the village to which he belonged; then, outside that, rough ground, the forest land belonging to the village for fuel, for green manure, for wood for house-building, for fences, or anything that was wanted. The village land as a whole was the common property, the village property. There were no very rich people; but there were none miserably poor, there were none who wanted food, there were none who had not some property in the land as members of that village community. Pañchamas were there: they had their own houses, their own homesteads as the other villagers had; they shared in the right to cut wood from the forest, and every village right belonged to them that belonged to the other people, save, as we can see, for the

fact that they worked for wages while the other villagers had the common ownership of the soil; the Pañchamas' land was assigned to them: they had their rights as had all the other villagers. There was no quarrel as there is to-day, as to the difficulty of the non-caste man having a piece of land and a house. They had their rights as men recognised, as they ought to be recognised in every civilised country.

Exactly that system was found also in England—the houses of the villagers, a group of families always at first; then the arable mark—"mark" means boundary—divided among the families; then the pasture land, good pasture; then the rough pasture and the forest: exactly on the same plan as the villages here. The system of government was the same. Every head of a household had a right to serve on the council, or to choose the men who should represent him in the administration of the village affairs. While the village was very small, the heads of households administered it directly. As it grew larger, they chose representatives, and you may read, if you have time, how they voted. They voted then in various ways, by lot, by ballots of differently coloured woods, secretly or openly. There were qualifications for voters. Certain crimes disqualified the voter, and his name must not be written in the list. Then you may read how the committees were formed—a committee for irrigation, a committee for justice, a committee for looking after

the land, a committee for the apportioning of paths to different villages. You may think that it sounds like a fairy tale. But you find it in inscriptions cut into stone; you find it in the copper plates that have been dug up, that show the arrangements in different villages, and you find the list of the village servants there, the records running from three to four centuries before the Christian Era right down to the nineteenth century. That was the old way, and most of the people lived in villages. Those villages were grouped together, as you may read in Manu's *Institutes*. Sometimes groups remained Republics, in the old form of Government by Council. In other cases they were monarchical, and when they needed a chief of the army he was apt gradually to become a King. We find the village government reproduced by the Lord Buddha in His Saṅgha. When He was here in India, six centuries before the Christian Era, He formed His Order of monks, His Saṅgha. He modelled it on these village Republics, and made the groups of His own Saṅgha meet regularly for the discharge of business. The method of voting again was by coloured tickets, and it might be either secret or public. I have collected some of these facts together and they are now published, so as to answer the pretence that in the Indian polity there is nothing except absolute monarchy until the Westerners came here and brought their ideas to help us. The truth is that in the Āryan there is

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innate the spirit of Self-Government, the love of liberty, and the capacity of managing his own affairs in his own way. These village Governments existed until in the south of India they were destroyed by the raiyat-wāri system in 1816, introduced by the East India Company on the advice of Sir Thomas Munro. It is the natural Government in India to have Self-Governing management of affairs by the people themselves.

In England the change from this came by the Norman Conquest. Then there came to be the Lord of the Manor, who sought to *own* the land; but since then, down to the present day, in some parts of southern Scotland the old system survives in the rights of members of a certain community to own land. The land cannot be touched until those few representatives of the past give consent.

Now in India for thousands of years, if there was an invasion and another ruler arose in some part of the country, it did not make very much difference. The people who came to conquer remained to settle, and they accepted the laws of the country and followed the customs which they found existing here. Take the incursions of those whose descendants are now our Musalmān brethren. What did they do as they conquered and settled? They accepted the old Hindū polity. Take the land tax of the great Emperor Akbar, and compare it with that laid down in the *Institutes* of Manu. They did not upset the old customs of the country. Further, Akbar

had as his finance minister a Hindū, as leader of the army a Hindū, and the Mughals became Indians, and did not remain foreigners, because of the tolerance of the sovereign. The result was that India remained prosperous on the old lines.

But in Europe, as in India, changes came with the advent of what is called modern civilisation. What is the particular point in that which has made such enormous differences? Three things are wanted for making wealth. One thing is land, the second thing is capital, the third thing is labour. Now in the India of the past, in the England of the past, those three things were found together. The land was held by groups of people, who lived on it, who cultivated it, who drew from it what they wanted. They sowed their food. The food harvested was eaten. The tax was only a small part of the harvest, and varied with the amount of the harvest. If the harvest was large, the villager got much and the king got much. If the harvest were small, the villager's claim came first, and until the villager was fed and had the seed for the next harvest, the king's share was diminished. That was the old rule, for on the village all depended. Hence you found widespread comfort, and there were very few people who had no share in the three—land, capital and labour. In the early West the conditions were the same. Villagers had the land. They had their accumulated savings

—capital. They had labour, by which the land was tilled and the capital increased, and so things went on and on and on for centuries; and though it is true that in England the feudal system made a change of technical ownership, the land being owned technically by the king, it never has been so in India: the king has never claimed to own the land, and where he gave a jaghir, it was the village tax and not the village itself that was given—a right to a share of the produce, not the ownership of the very means of livelihood; that is the difference between the common land system and the feudal system. Cultivation of the land was the foundation of the right to the ownership of the land for the time; the owner was not some outside person. The king had a share. Why? Because he protected the people, because he saved them from fighting, because he administered justice. The king was paid for what he did, but the land belonged to the people.

Remember that great Aryan principle when you begin your Social Reconstruction. Do not be led away by the idea that the land revenue is anything more than a tax levied by the Government on the people in exchange for the performance of certain duties. The modern English look on land as private property, but that was not the way of their Saxon forefathers, nor the Indian way: it never has been. In both countries, land, capital and labour have lately been divorced from each other. You see it more in

England, because the divorce is older, and from that divorce the poverty of England arose. England was not poor in the Middle Ages; her people were called the people of merry England. There were no slums then, no wide division between the rich and the poor. The lord in his castle had straw on the floor just as a peasant had, no carpets, no great luxury; his servants and himself dined in one great hall. The higher class of the population, the lords, the well-born people, all ate at the same table with the retainers and servants, though the food of the higher was more diversified. The result was that there was not the antagonism of class that you find now. But when the great feudal system was destroyed by Edward IV—who practically made the Barons tear each other into pieces in order that the crown might rise supreme above them all—you find the nobility of England practically destroyed in the Wars of the Roses, and the tyranny of the Tudors began.

What occurred to the land? The land which had been arable land was changed largely into pasture. It was found to pay better to lay down land in pasture, which needed little labour, and to sell the cattle, rather than keep the land arable and so need more labour. The result was that the country villages began to send their young men into the towns; they could not get a living on the land. The cattle took their place, and then arose in England the

phenomenon of the "landless men". The men without land, floating about, needed means of subsistence, and they became the "sturdy beggars," whose number and truculence gave rise to the Poor Law. Enclosure Acts in the time of the four Georges took the remaining common land away from the people. Commons after commons were taken by the Lord of the Manor: he claimed the common land, and having all the power in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, there was no trouble in passing such Acts. Only the villagers were robbed, and they were unrepresented in the so-called people's House.

Thus the landlord class became richer and richer, and the villagers became poorer and poorer; and there was one favourite song in the time of the Georges, about the way in which a man who stole the goose from off the common was punished by the law, and the villagers used to sing the question: "What ought to be the punishment of the man who steals the common from the goose?" Thus the villagers grew poorer while the landlords grew richer and richer, and less and less labour was wanted. As said, the diminution of arable land was the origin of the Poor Law in the reign of Elizabeth. Men had to live; they asked for food, and became a danger.

Lastly came the introduction of power machinery. Up till then there had been cottage industries, there had been groups of apprentices, craftsmen and master workmen, who manufactured goods for the people.



Power machinery came, and villages became factory sites, and village youths also went to new towns, round factories. Then, women and children toiled long hours for low wages, and large profits flowed into the hands of factory owners and made the capitalist class and the proletariat, or landless labouring class. Ever wider grew the gulf between the rich and poor, and human beings became "hands," belonging to owners with brains.

Long before power machinery came, England had been Protectionist, trying to monopolise profitable manufactures. You think of England as a Free Trade country, don't you? But England only became Free Trade after her own manufactures had been established by Protection. Go back to the beginning of the cotton industry in Lancashire; go back to the time of the woollen industry, when wool was manufactured in Flanders and in France, and England wanted the lion's share of manufacturing wool. What do you find her doing? You find her establishing laws against foreign imports. When Lancashire began the weaving of cloth, you were supplying all England with calicoes, cotton cloths of all kinds. Your calicoes were purchased by the womanhood of England. Lancashire wanted to clothe the English women, and so Protection was set up in England, until at last it was made penal to import Indian printed calico into England, and the purchaser, the importer and the seller all came into the grip of the

penal law. That is how your cotton industry was destroyed by Protection in England. Gradually Lancashire made more calico than the English women could wear, and more food was wanted than England could raise, and then they became Free Traders and denounced Protection. How much of this history do you know? When they tell you to imitate England in Free Trade, when you are reviving your industries, why not answer the English teachers: "You protected your nascent industries until they were strong; and you only became all Free Traders when you wanted corn, and when you had the coal, the iron which the world wanted, and when you made machinery and you wanted it to go to every country; you became Free Traders because it was advantageous to you, but you were Protectionists before." That is the answer to the English people, who blame you for requiring Protection.

As first said, with power machinery introduction arose the English factories, and gradually round factories grew up groups of men, women and children working 10, 12, 14 hours a day. Little children worked in Lancashire and Yorkshire factories in order to make wealth for the manufacturers, till they fell asleep over their work: they were beaten to keep them awake. They wore out their little fingers at the work, and were punished, until at last the misery of the children woke the conscience of England, until the "Cry

of the Children" roused the motherhood and fatherhood in happier homes, for it was told how young children in their sleep went on with the movement of the throwing of the shuttle, so that even in the few hours of sleep that were allowed, they were dreaming of the work. So, because the land was private property, and because the capital—accumulated savings made by labour—was also private property, there grew up the proletariat: labour was necessary for the land to cultivate it, necessary for the capital to create and increase it, but neither land nor capital belonged to labour, but only wages. What is wage? It is the price of labour sold in the open market, and the price becomes lower and lower and lower as the competition of the labourers with each other becomes more bitter. The labourer has nothing but himself to sell. He owns his body, he owns nothing else; his stomach, his hands, his legs are his; that stomach of his is too often empty. What can he do then but sell his hands? "Sell or starve," says the capitalist. The men starved, and then sold their hands. They were helpless—single labourers who starved. If a man is not employed, what power has he against the landlord who owns the land, and against the capitalist who owns the mill? Even if he is willing to die himself, his wife is starving, his children are starving—wage-slaves we called them in England, for verily they were slaves. These same conditions are growing up here. Your power

machinery is bringing about the same conditions here. Your Bombay slums are like the slums of England—not quite so bad or miserable, because your capitalists' hearts are not so hard, your climate not so cold; but in every civilisation in the world to-day there is starvation at the bottom and luxury at the top. That is the difference between the older civilisation and the new. There are a few people who are very rich, and there are others who are miserably poor.

Now, every civilised Nation is built on a foundation of these miserable, uneducated, ignorant, wretched people, living in hovels not fit for cattle to be housed in. I speak of what I know in England: I have been into these places; I have seen how these people live. Sometimes in London, when you go to the East End, you may go down to the cellar, out of the street. In the cellar you find a mother with a new-born child in one corner, lying on rags, and other children playing on the floor, and the husband comes round, stumbling down, drunken, violent, striking the miserable children and the suffering mother. These conditions are everywhere, and it is for you to prevent these conditions rising here to the pitch that they have reached in England.

In England, after a time, when the men found that they were hungry, when they found that their labour over-filled the storehouses of the owners of the mills, so that while they wanted clothes, clothes were rotting in the merchants' stores, they

began to get angry. They began to say: "Why should the very success of our labour mean that we are locked out, in order to give time for the stocks we have made being sold to others, so that we, our wives and our children, are going half-naked and starving in the cold?" Presently, they said: "We are weak, because we are disunited; let us join together, let us link our hands, let every workman hold the hand of other workmen in a Union, and not stand alone. We will use numbers against your wealth. By union we will become strong." Slowly there came a better time in England for skilled workmen. They struck for higher wages, and starved, and sometimes won and sometimes lost, until at last the forces grew more equal; but still the struggle goes on, and is now threatening English industry with ruin. .

Before the Unions were formed, there had been many outrages, many riots, many houses burnt down: because the young Unions were weak and could not make terms. The law was against them. The English law of conspiracy was used against the associations of labourers, a law which you could very easily twist, because if you join together and if in your association a crime is committed, the old law included all the people in the crime although they had nothing to do with it. So, against the Unions of labourers criminal law was used. The landlord spoke of them as rebellious, as seditious, as treasonable, and demanded

that the law should crush them. They had no newspapers, no one to plead for them, no members who represented them. They had only numbers. None the less, the Unions grew; none the less they became stronger and stronger, and when the merchants had a chance of big profits, when there was a great demand for goods and prices were going up, then the men struck and said: "We won't labour unless you give us a share of the profits." The merchants gave way under the pressure, and wages rose, and so things went on. When there was over-production of goods, there came the lock-out on the part of the employer to give time for sales; when there was demand for work, there came the strike on the part of the workmen. With the Reform Bill of 1867, when labour began to obtain power in the House of Commons, then the laws began to be changed, and labourers' rights recognised.

Thus grew up Trade Unions, organising labour, making it hold its own against capital, because without it capital cannot fructify. It was a condition of war, an impossible condition to go on for ever: it meant war—the great strikes in England. There was a civil war between capital and labour in 1914, as well as the danger of civil war in Ireland. That is how things have gone on in the West, and how they are: one set of people holding land, another capital, and another labour. Bring capital, labour and land together, and then we shall live in peace, and then the war between

them will be over. That is the note of Social Reconstruction in England. In the War the State has become owner for the time of many things that before belonged to individuals: the State has taken over the railways. We could not allow a company to stand between the Nation and its vital interests in carrying on a tremendous War. The railways are never likely to go back to individual ownership. For many years now, it has been realised that the State ought to be nothing more than the people acting collectively, not as a Government over against the people, but as a Government that is merely the Executive of the Nation and controlled by it. You may well hesitate to put power into the hands of a Government which is over against you, and which you do not control. But if you put power into the hands of a Government which is your creature, which you create and which you can break if you do not like it, how can such a Government tyrannise over you?

So people are beginning to realise that the true note of social reconstruction, as it affects individuals and the State, is that the State ought to be responsible to the Nation as its Government, as its Executive organ, that Government ought to do whatever is better done collectively than can be done individually. That seems to me the true note. If you can do things better united, do them united. If you can do them better individually, do them

individually. Everybody wants railways, and they should be controlled by the Government. Mines of coal, iron and other minerals are necessary for wealth. Let the Government control them, and supply the capital wanted for large enterprises; let the Government control, and appoint its men for management, but let the profits go to the people and not to the individual. That is the idea which is gradually growing up in England, and more and more that will be the rule of Social Reconstruction.

Take the children. When I was on the London School Board, I was elected by a very poor part of London—the East End. When I went to the schools there, I learned of children falling fainting on the ground. When I asked why the vitality of the children was so low, the teacher said it was only due to hunger. In that School Board I pleaded that the hungry child ought to be fed before it was educated, because to educate a hungry child is to overstrain the brain that is not able to understand what is taught for want of nourishment. They told me then: "Oh, you are pauperising the people—the parents." My answer was a very short one: "First of all, if a man and woman are not able to feed their children, they are paupers already, and you cannot make them worse by feeding their children. Even if they are bad parents, there is no reason why the children should suffer. The child is the future citizen, the backbone of the future Nation, and you



cannot allow parents to starve children, whether by inability or indifference. The children are an asset of the Nation, and they must be fed, whatever their parents may do." At that time the people did not approve it, but now they say the same thing that I said then. In England, where there is compulsory and free education, they have also free meals for every hungry child. That must work into Social Reconstruction. There ought to be no hungry child in a Nation, unless the whole Nation is starving. That is one rule that you will have to adopt. Hunger is a National crime, where general misery does not exist. If everybody is poor, then some may be hungry, but if there is too much for one man and there is one hungry child, the surplusage of the man who has too much, must feed the hungry child. That is the Law of Brotherhood. If those children were your children, would you be willing to be fed well while they were starving? They are as much your children as though they were born of your bodies. That is what the Lord Munu told you. The youngers are your children as the elders are your parents, and a love which does not go outside the family is a selfish love. The family must have the first claim upon you; but when the children of the family are supplied, you have a duty to the children outside, who are also your children, though not of the same father and mother.

That is beginning to be realised in the West. Take the municipalities in such towns as Bradford

and Birmingham, and see how child-welfare is becoming the duty of every municipality. They take care even of the unborn child. Pregnant women, the mother who is to be, in a few months, is looked after in well-managed towns; her food is attended to, her housing is attended to. If the house is too poor, she can go for the time being to a place where better comfort is provided for her. On the mother and child depends the future of the Nation. The War has taught England that, and the lesson has been learnt. The State in England is setting aside millions of pounds in order to build houses for the poor.

The poverty in England is in some ways more cruel than the poverty here. The dirt and squalor are worse, drunkenness intensifies poverty, and poverty stimulates drinking. I have been in the London streets when the public houses closed. I have seen crowds of unsexed women and brutalised men, drunken, shouting, obscene, pouring as human filth out of the drink shops. Is it right, is it just, that such extremes should exist in any country? There were women who worked twenty hours a day in order to get enough to feed their children. A member of Parliament, questioning a woman about the conditions of her labour, said to her: "How can you live on this?" "We do not live, Sir," was the answer; "we starve." Those things have to be changed. If you do not change them, whether in

England or in India, by your law and your social re-arrangement, they will be changed by revolution, as they have been changed elsewhere. There is a limit to the suffering of the people. There is a time when the misery of living is more terrible than the risk of dying, and then revolution comes. It came in France with its reign of terror. It came in Russia with its red terror there. The people are patient; they never revolt until the misery in the revolt is less than the misery in going on as they are. People do not want to go out and fight soldiers armed with bayonets and machine-guns. They only do it when they are driven to despair by the scourge of hunger and by the gnawing tooth of want. Then they go mad.

The poverty in India is very, very terrible. "Half the agricultural population"—I have often quoted it, and I saw it quoted in the Imperial Legislative Council by an official the other day—"never know what it is to have a full meal." One meal a day, and that not a full one! Is that right in a country like this, in a country where they can vote away £45 millions for the possible chance of a continued War which has come to an end? Those two things do not match: misery, starvation, on the one side, and reckless extravagance with the people's money on the other.

What ought to be the law and the social order, not the social anarchy that we have now? The law

should be in a civilised country that every child born into a Nation shall be surrounded with the conditions that enable him to develop the whole of the qualities that he has brought with him into the world. Think that over and ask if it is unjust. Surely human skill, human ability, human genius ought to be able to build a social order where that elementary condition will be realised : it is not beyond the reach of man. It existed in the past, before the enormous wealth of the present was produced by monopolies.

What should be the next step ? Every child born into the Nation should be educated—educated without cost to the parents, for the State is going to be profited by the child far more than the parents—free, compulsory education, education up to the time when the child is fit to work. Look at Mysore. Mysore has introduced free university education. If Mysore can do that, why not the British Rāj ? Why not any other Province ? Why not Bombay, Bengal and Madras Presidencies ? Is Mysore wealthier than British India, that it can afford university education free ? Mysore has the sense to understand that an educated people is a prosperous people, and that if you educate your children, your boys and your girls, your men and women become more productive, more intelligent, more useful to the State.

There are certain words used as catchwords, and one such is democracy which is sweeping over the world. They speak of liberty, equality and fraternity.